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TWO

DISCOURSES

PREACHED IN ARLINGTON-STREET CHURCH,

JULY 12 AND JULY 19, 1863.

BY EZRA S. GANNETT.

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Repentance amidst Deliverance:

A DISCOURSE

PREACHED IN ARLINGTON-STREET CHURCH,

On Sunday, July 12, 1863.

By EZRA S. GANNETT.

DISCOURSE.

"Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." — Romans ii. 4.

The government of God embraces national as well as personal history; and the same principles of eternal righteousness are enforced, and similar methods of gracious discipline are used, in one relation as in the other. In the form which it takes, the rebuke of the apostle is addressed to an individual: — "therefore thou art inexcusable, O man! . . . not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." But the connection shows that it was directed upon a class of men numerous in his day, and perhaps not less numerous now. We may spread the reproof over a still larger surface, without weakening its force. The people of a land should know that the Divine goodness is meant to lead them to repentance.

In the providence of God, we have been delivered from a weight of anxiety under which many hearts were sinking. Our apprehensions are not wholly dispelled. The end of the war may not be as near as some persons hope, nor its result as sure as many believe; but we have obtained not only relief from our immediate fears, but real and important advantages in the struggle which is imperilling the national existence. These advantages have cost us dear. A great price has been paid for success in the loss of life which has sent mourning into thousands of homes. Our own city

shares in the bereavement; and with sorrowing hearts are the lifeless forms of the brave and good received from the battle-field, to be borne to the grave. The general exultation is tempered by sympathy with the mourners, alas! how many, whose loved ones, if not stricken down in the murderous fight, are victims of the casualties or exposures of military service! Still we rejoice in the change which has come over the aspect of the national cause, and see in it a Divine providence; for whether it be disaster or success which marks the progress of the war, and however foreign from the purpose of the Creator in giving life to men be their mutual destruction of life, nothing takes place in human affairs, or enters into private experience, independently of His providence without whom "not a sparrow falleth to the ground." The Chief Magistrate of the nation, in timely words, has expressed his desire, that "He whose will, not ours, should ever be done, be everywhere remembered and reverenced with profoundest gratitude." Under the sanction of the highest official authority, and under the more urgent call of propriety and duty, I invite you, my friends, to consider the will of God in the events which have lifted our hearts into so much of gladness and hope.

That will seems to me very plain; and although you may not think I put a sufficiently liberal construction on the Divine providence, nor I think it needful to bring into view at this time its full meaning, you will concur with me, I am sure, in acknowledging that it contains the instruction which I shall draw from it. Exultation and sympathy are not the only feelings that should be awakened: the goodness of God is meant to lead us to repentance. In days of painful depression, the wisdom which studies a seasonable moment, as well as an honest expression, for needed reproof might impose silence, lest the contemplation of our errors should create discouragement, or faithfulness in the teacher be interpreted as disloyalty in the citizen. With a brighter hour, the opportunity returns for an exposure of the

sins of which God has so mercifully mitigated the chastisement. In such an hour, the contrast between our unworthiness and the Divine generosity is suited to humble us. Unless we shut our eyes on the plainest lesson of the Divine goodness, how can we fail to perceive that it calls us to repentance? I confess, that, on the recent anniversary, — which seemed to be doubly consecrated by the recollections of the past and by the congratulations we were exchanging over the intelligence just received, — my strongest feeling, after the long breath of relief had been drawn, was the desire, that some one could lift up his voice at the corners of the streets, amidst the congregated crowds of the city, and through the dwellings of the land, crying, "To your altars and your closets, ye American people! There fall on your knees before Almighty God; and, while you bless him for the deliverance he has granted, confess your sins before him, and with penitent hearts resolve on better lives. To prayer, to humiliation, ye people whom the Lord has blessed; and let praise be the vestibule of repentance!"

"What are the sins," some one may ask, "which should clothe our souls in sackcloth?" Of sins which are more immediately connected with our civil troubles, — and in which, as many believe, those troubles had their origin, — let others speak. I find occasion enough for penitential sorrow in habits of the people, of long continuance. These habits may have prepared the way for civil discord, and for the rupture and bloodshed which have followed; and under the law of moral adjustment, which makes an evil inflict its own penalty, the war may have exasperated the corrupt elements which pervade society: but the general character of the people, as seen under the light of the privileges and the obligations with which they have been surrounded ever since the birth of the American Republic, is the ground of my entreaty, that they will now listen to the voice, which, speaking through the events of the last few days, calls them to repentance.

One characteristic of the American people, when brought under such an examination, is a want of active religious faith. They are not a religious people. It may be said that this is a rash and unjust statement, disproved by a multitude of facts. What facts? Our open churches and our closed shops on Sunday? Respect for institutions, or compliance with custom, does not make a land religious. A Bible in every house, and daily meetings for prayer? If the Bibles are read and the meetings attended by but a minority of the adult population, they do not prove that the people are religious in thought or temper. Numberless sects and warm disputes? They furnish little evidence that men entertain the truths of religion as the elements or rules of life. Such facts as these belong to the external aspects of society, and settle nothing in regard to its real character. There are sincere Christians, however, — pious, godly persons, — more than can be counted. Doubtless; and they are the salvation of the land. Yet they constitute but a part of the whole body of inhabitants. They are outnumbered by the irreligious: I do not say, by the vicious or the openly wicked, but by those who live without a consciousness of religious impulses or restraints. The country, we may be told, has now, and has always had, among its citizens, a greater proportion of devout and conscientious men than any other country on the globe, — France, Germany, or England, with all its boastful reverence. Perhaps so; though a doubt may prevail in some minds. But the comparison which must determine our moral or spiritual position lies not between ourselves and other nations, but between our lives and the requisitions of the gospel of Christ under which we live. Tried by such a standard, who will dare to pronounce the people of the United States — in the South or in the North, on either side of the Alleghanies or of the Rocky Mountains — a people who fear God and keep his commandments? If religion is a dominant influence in any part of the land, it exercises this power in New England. Are the greater number of persons

in the New-England States actuated by religious considerations in their daily life? Of course they are not, we may be told; because the millennium is still in the remote distance. Yet it is in this same New England that the church-bells send out their invitations to a worship, on which not one-half of the people attend; and Bibles, seldom opened, are found in the chambers of every hotel; and sects strive for the capture of a proselyte as if he were a prize, to gain which they might sacrifice truth itself. No: we do not recognize the presence of God as the support of our life, or the will of God as its law. Look at the effect which the war has had in calling the religious sentiment into exercise. Has it had any such effect? Do you hear men conversing on the religious discipline through which we are passing? Do our newspapers, which at once reflect and form the sensibility of the people, speak of the Divine providence, the Divine government, or the Divine intention, in their criticism on the facts which they report? The war has called out an active and inexhaustible interest in our fellow-creatures; and, so far, it has been a means of educating our higher nature. We have made great progress in humanity within these two years. Is there any indication of a similar progress in the culture of religious faith? On the contrary, have we not forgotten God? As a people, we have neglected religion. Is not that a sin? Does it not include many sins?

Secondly, We are a worldly-minded people. Our hearts are set on this world. Some are ambitious for distinction; some are eager for gain; some devote themselves to pleasure. The difference between these classes is formal rather than substantial. Great provocation is given to the indulgence of a worldly temper, by the facilities which the country affords for the acquisition of power, the accumulation of wealth, and the enjoyment of life: in no other land have such temptations been presented to every member of society. An explanation, however, is not an excuse. That it is easy to do wrong, or hard to raise the character above surrounding influ-

ences, does not exculpate us for sinking into contentment with a low and weak goodness. We have our literary men and our scientific men, — more of them every year; but they do not succeed in lifting the people into higher aims or purer tastes. We are "of the earth, earthy." The flavor of the ground cleaves to our pursuits. We do not covet nor seek the skies. The great object in life, with most persons, is either a subsistence or a fortune: the former drags the mind down to narrow or gross associations, and the latter confines it among ignoble hopes and unworthy satisfactions. The secular character of our industry is the most obvious feature in American civilization. We work for the body, not for the soul; we build for the eye rather than for the imagination; reversing the apostolic rule, that the followers of Christ should walk by faith, not by sight. Followers of Christ! Alas! how few can bear the test of that description! Followers of the heavenly-minded Jesus, the meek and lowly One, the Son of God, who lay in the Father's bosom, and drew the inspiration of his life from prayer! How many seek a resemblance to that pattern?

Here, again, we may attempt to break the force of the reproof with which conscience is armed, by pointing to the degradation or inconsistency of the rest of the world. A poor device, a dangerous plea. What if all mankind, besides ourselves, be enslaved to sense, or lie under the darkness of superstition? In the providence of God, we are called to be children of light, and should walk in the light, and cause our light to shine before men, that they too, at once stung and encouraged by our example, may glorify our Father who is in heaven. We are familiar with great principles, political and religious. Our institutions express a wisdom which not only extracted from the past its best teachings, but, by an almost prophetic insight, anticipated the decisions of the distant future, and wrought them into the fabric of our national order. Large, generous, and just ideas in regard to the rights and the obligations on which society

reposes, have been embodied before our eyes ever since we were old enough to discern the substance through the form. The spiritual truths which quicken and sanctify character have been soliciting our attention from the earliest moment of moral development. Religion has not been clad in ecclesiastical vestments, an object of idle curiosity or timid admiration. The free and glorious gospel of Christ has thrown its instruction broadcast over the land: oh that we had let it take root, and bring forth fruit! As good as the rest of the world! We ought to have been a better, a purer, a nobler people, by a difference that should have struck like the morning sun on their twilight experience; a people with higher aims, sweeter tempers, and holier efforts. Could this war ever have come upon us, if North and South, the farmer and the planter, the capitalist and the operative, the merchant and the author, the man whose vote had its weight in determining our political history or our social life, and the woman whose influence guided that vote, had been true to the meaning of our civil charter and our religious faith? Never was a people, in the Divine providence, intrusted with such privileges, encompassed by such opportunities, or entreated by such responsibilities, as we; and mark the result. As a people, we are laden with the cares of this life, worldly in our tastes, earthly in our views; a people who subordinate spiritual progress to material interests, and who let the heart be hardened and the conscience blinded by the base love of money; a people who make prosperity their heaven, and external success the end of their life. Do we not need a John the Baptist to go through the land, crying, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand"? Unless we hear such a command issuing from the providence of God, will not his kingdom come once more upon earth, as in the time of the self-willed Jews, to repeat their sad fate in our history, and "grind us to powder"?

Once more: we are, as a people, governed more by passion and prejudice than by truth and justice. There is in

the American character, or rather in human nature, when it recovers its fair exercise, an element of good sense, that corrects the errors into which it may have fallen; but this sound part of our character comes into action only soon enough to repair, if it may, the mischief which our folly has wrought. The partial and precipitate judgment to which we are prone vitiates the working of our political institutions, and exposes them to misconception, while it brings on us the censure of foreign nations. There seems to be little ground for hope that experience will cure us of this fault. Have we not already had large experience of its disastrous consequences? Is not the history of two generations full of examples of its dangerous influence? We suffer ourselves to be split into parties by the least difference of opinion, and then proceed to sustain our party with more zeal than we show in behalf of the Government or the country. Political action is continually running into the channels which blind or deaf prejudice marks out; and our politicians so generally and so soon become either leaders or tools of a party, that the name has lost its true signification, and is used to describe, not an intelligent and high-minded guardian of the public interests, but a man rendered incapable of exercising a fair judgment on questions of the greatest importance by his subserviency to the will of a party, — that will as hastily formed as it is tyrannically enforced. Immediate and extreme peril would doubtless call forth the common sentiment which even our fierce political strifes cannot extinguish; but, when the pressure of alarm is withdrawn, the old tempers revive. Has not the country been afflicted, through the whole period of the war which has assailed the very life of the Republic, with this indulgence of openly expressed or ill-concealed hostility to men engaged in the same great work of preserving the inheritance of constitutional freedom and republican government which our fathers transmitted to us, and which, in spite of our unfaithfulness in its use, had grown to a magnitude which astonished all Europe, and made the

hearts of kings tremble? Shall we never learn to respect the motives of those who differ from us, or to distrust our own rash conclusions? Are candor and moderation vices? Must patriotism arm itself with the vituperation of the tongue, that it may rescue the Union from the violence of the sword? At a time when mutual recognition of honest purpose and hearty co-operation are most needed, shall we be discussing in angry tones the merits of commanders who have been either successful or unfortunate, and augment the difficulties of our situation by passionate preferences and ill-considered criticisms? Shall we never be taught to hold our judgment in suspense, till we can obtain at least some explanation of what, in our ignorance, seems to us strange or wrong? Shall we never learn the value of time in preparing the way for the grand issues of Providence? The same journal that reports the intemperate declamation of a meeting at one end of the Union, and on one extreme of opinion, gives us information of equally foolish proceedings at the other end and on the opposite extreme. We might let such folly pass as the ebullition of a feeling which will soon be ashamed of its own excesses, if it had not acquired the rigidity of habit and the force of antagonism to good order, and therefore brought itself under the reproof that should be laid on all sin.

Yet once again: are we not open to the charge of selfishness in our country's extremity? That it is a selfishness of which we are but half conscious, or that it is relieved by a compassion unparalleled in its efficiency for those who have suffered on their country's behalf, only makes it more proper that its true character should be exposed. It is a selfishness which accumulates and enjoys the comforts of life, as if there was nothing in the history of the times to make us thoughtful or sad. How can our hearts be free from sadness, when the light of so many homes has been darkened? How can we be careless, when so much uncertainty hangs over each day, so much doubt over the future? Is this a time for com-

puting or for amassing gains, — for amassing them, too, at our country's expense? Is this a time for gayety and splendor, for a display of pride or wealth on the foundation of a success due to some arrangement, by which the war, that has caused so much suffering, has thrown an opportunity of pecuniary profit into the hands of honest or dishonest men? Should not the period through which we are passing be marked by sobriety of thought, speech, and conduct, by earnest inquiry into our moral condition, and by repentance for our personal negligences and transgressions?

I do not conceive that such exercises of mind or heart would lessen the good service we may render to our country in its hour of trial, or would dishearten any loyal supporter of the Government. Discourage loyalty by the confession of our sins! What is the patriotism worth that cannot bear to hear or see the truth? A genuine patriotism invokes God's blessing on its efforts; but the prayer which ignores human unworthiness is hypocrisy. A loyal heart is a religious heart, — an humble and a contrite heart. It is a wretched mistake into which some men fall, who say (I doubt if they believe their own assertion) that courage and enterprise are chilled by religious sentiment. Have we not had fact to disprove a remark at once so false and so mischievous? What braver man, or more successful in the conduct of the enterprises which he undertook, than that worthy Admiral, over whose recent death, in the glow of his piety as well as in the midst of his usefulness, not only our sister State of Connecticut, but the whole North and West, have poured out their sincere mourning? If we must have war, let us have such men to lead our forces by land or sea. If our country can be saved only at the cannon's mouth, let those who fear God, and believe in his righteous judgment, be intrusted with the work.

God has given us deliverance from the suspense which weighed down our hearts. What we may yet be required to undergo, he alone knows; but the present relief and the

present hope should lift our souls into communion with him. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Shall it have this effect? Our sins should be brought before our contemplation under the light which his goodness casts upon them. I have spoken of our ingratitude and insensibility to the Divine will, of our want of a high moral purpose, of our disregard of political justice, and of our indulgence of a greedy or ambitious selfishness. These are the titles of large classes, rather than separate examples, of sin. Repentance becomes us in this hour of thanksgiving. In your homes, my hearers, let your prayers be laden with honest confession. Let the people humble themselves before the God of their fathers, and seek both forgiveness to efface the record of their past errors, and strength to be their support through the unknown experience which may put the sincerity of their faith, as well as the purity of their patriotism, to the test. Such humiliation and such prayer will be the best preparation for a disappointment of their hopes, or for a bright success and a peaceful prosperity. Let us repeat what was said at the beginning of our discourse, that every event is included within the Divine providence; and that therefore the issue of the present struggle, and all the steps to that issue, and all the means by which it may be accelerated or determined, are under the control of an almighty and righteous Power. Let us remember that the Divine favor is bestowed, not on the self-confident, but on the obedient. Let it be a persuasion ever present to our minds, for it is a truth never disregarded in the economy of the Divine government, whether over individuals or over nations, that final success can crown only a righteous purpose righteously pursued. Be it borne in our thought, be it felt in our hearts, now and always, that chastisement is profitable discipline to those who rightly receive it, and deliverance a blessing only for those who use it according to the Divine intention. May the experience of the present concur with the history of the past in preparing this whole people for the result which the old prophet has

described in language suggested by his own, but applicable to our times ! — " I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me ; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, — a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them ; and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely ; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness."

Mobs:

A DISCOURSE

PREACHED IN ARLINGTON-STREET CHURCH,

On Sunday, July 19, 1863.

By EZRA S. GANNETT.

DISCOURSE.

"Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil."
Romans xiii. 3.

It has been said during our present war, that the pertinency of the language of the Old Testament to modern times has received many new illustrations. Passages, not only in the Prophets, but in the Psalms of David, which the milder spirit of Christianity was thought to have disapproved, have been read, in a tone rather of Hebrew defiance or exultation than of Christian charity. It may be doubted whether we promote the interests of a civilization in which brotherly love is an element by a familiar use of imprecations, or praises, that breathe the fierce spirit of an age anterior to the entrance of the gospel into the world. There is a passage in the New Testament, to which recent occurrences have given an unusual value, and the meaning of which, obscure as it has seemed to many persons, is made clear by its relation to such occurrences. It is the passage in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, of which our text forms a part. In the course of that Letter to one of the early churches, the apostle is led, probably by the peculiar position in which the Christian believers were placed towards a Heathen government, and which must have troubled many among them, to consider the duty which they owed to the Civil Power. In a few brief sentences, each of which contains an important truth, he decides the questions that might arise out of their political relations. Without citing

the memorable words with which the Master, in whose name he taught, disappointed the malice of his enemies, — "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," — he must have had them in mind, when he adduced the Divine will as a ground of submission to human authority. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Such is the instruction, and such the principles, with which Paul meets the case under his notice. The principles belong to all history, and the instruction which derives its force from them extends over all time. By rising above the immediate circumstances by which they were surrounded, the apostle extricated his friends from an embarrassment in which the character of the government under which they lived might have been thought to place those who had forsaken the Pagan altars. He could not have meant to say, that Heathenism, whether in the person of the priest or under the shadow of the throne, was a Divine institution; still less to pronounce the Emperor Nero — who, though he had not then entered on the career of crime which has made his name infamous, was known to be a man of profligate life — the choice of Heaven for the imperial purple. He simply but strongly asserts that civil government is of Divine origin, and has for its purpose the suppression of evil and the encouragement of good behavior. In emphatic terms, he establishes the right of Government to use the strong arm of force in maintaining its authority; and by the double argument, which an appeal to fear on the one hand, and to conscience on the other, enables him to frame, urges obedience to the power which in the providence of God then held sway. Incidental questions and extreme cases he passes by, that he may present the fundamental principles on which the order of society reposes.

This is the interpretation that should be put on a passage by which some readers have been perplexed, and which, as I

have said, finds a new illustration of its value in occurrences of recent date. The authority of the Government under which we live has been met by open and determined resistance. For three days, in the commercial metropolis of the country, with a population of nearly a million, it was virtually overthrown. A mob, which, like all mobs, was inflamed by its own success, trampled order under foot, violated the rights of property, invaded and destroyed private dwellings, cruelly beat and wilfully murdered men, — some as objects of hatred for their discharge of official duty, and others on the mere ground of suspicion, — interrupted the usual methods of communication, committed the greatest excesses, and by their deeds and their threats sent alarm through the whole land. The contagion of disorder spread; and, in our own city, similar violence could be suppressed only by a resort to the ultimate defence of society against the madness of its members. Military force, promptly called into exercise, alone saved us from loss and suffering which no one can compute. Military force, tardily brought upon the scene, alone saved New York from pillage, and its inhabitants from unknown atrocities. For it is the characteristic of a mob, that it grows fiercer with every gratification its passions obtain, and with every hour's delay on the part of those whose office it is to guard the public peace. The evil it is sure to work is a reason for its instant suppression, the force of which may be felt by every one. When neither life nor property is safe from the hand of violence, it becomes the interest of the whole community to arrest the proceedings of its disorderly members. There is another reason, however, of greater weight with those who pay regard to the character as well as the consequences of evil actions. A good citizen or a thoughtful man will oppose the progress of a riot, not from a dread of personal injury alone, but also, and still more resolutely, from abhorrence of the purpose which actuates a mob. The immediate object may, and will, vary with the cause of the excitement; but the purpose which

lies behind the immediate end is always the same. It is a purpose of hostility to the Government. That we may perceive the wickedness of such a purpose, we need only consider the nature of the institution which is so rashly assailed.

Government is organized society; or, to speak with more exactness, is the expression and security of organized society. Without government, society is dissolved into elements which are mutually destructive. In the first instance alarm and terror, and at last universal distrust, passion, and ruin, follow on an overthrow of government. Social order is indispensable to the existence of society. It is the province of the government to uphold social order; and therefore, with the downfall of government, society is reduced to chaos. The form of the government is not involved in this primary consideration. Whether autocratic or democratic, the life of the government is endangered, and with that the existence of society.

If it be said that tame submission is inconsistent alike with the freedom of the individual conscience and with social progress, our answer is, that we are vindicating a fundamental truth against the purpose of a mob, which acts without conscience and without judgment. An individual has the alternative of obedience to the law, or acquiescence in the penalty it threatens; and he must conscientiously determine which course he will take. A people under tyrannical rule may throw themselves upon the ultimate right of revolution, and seek redress for their grievances in the establishment of a better form of social order. A mob neither accepts the penalty of disobedience, nor aims at a reconstruction of the State. Its single purpose in the beginning is resistance; its final work is destruction.

A mob, therefore, must be put down. The Government has but one course which it can pursue, without neglecting its proper function and sacrificing its own existence. The people should concur in the attempt to suppress the lawlessness of the hour, unless they wish to be swept into a vortex

of ruin. Upon the occurrence of an outbreak which menaces the institutions and the life of society, the first and the only thing to be done is to stop it. Its origin, or the provocation it may have had, can be considered afterwards. Remedies for evils out of which it may have arisen can be provided afterwards. The first thing to be done is to extinguish the fire, which, if not checked, will consume the securities of freedom as well as the defences of authority. The mob must be put down at once. Tampering with it is like giving a wild beast food enough to whet his appetite; retreating before it is like inviting a pack of wolves to follow you to your home. A mob knows no restraint within itself. It is unscrupulous, headlong, desperate. It but half understands itself at first; and, as it proceeds, passion becomes its impulse, and plunder its work. London and Paris and New York, and every city in ancient or modern times that has been cursed with this direst of evils, — worse than a despot's cruelty, worse than an invading army, worse than a pestilence, — gives the same lesson, — the mob must be put down, promptly and entirely.

The means by which alone it can be subdued is a proof of its atrocious character. In its earliest stage, it may be subject to advice or persuasion. A magistrate, with a riot-act in his hand, may disperse the crowd; or a citizen, whose well-known worth commands influence, may be respectfully heard: but let the disturbance get headway, and you may as well build barriers against the tempest with the paper on which a riot-act is printed as attempt to control the stormy multitude with good counsel. They will not heed argument or entreaty. You may reason with a madman sooner than with a mob. But one means of reducing them to submission can be used, and that is physical force. The strong arm of the Government must be laid on them heavily. Blows and wounds must bring them to their senses. Let the riot go on for a little while, and the ordinary means of sustaining its authority which the Government has at its disposal will not be sufficient.

Military force must be called in, well-directed and determined military force. The musket and the sword must be freely used. The cavalry's persistent advance and the cannon's deadly discharge must clear the street. Men who will not flee must fall, and order be restored at the sacrifice of life. This is the terrible retribution to which they who are concerned in these social outrages expose themselves. Blood becomes the guaranty of safety.

If the evil of which we speak be such as has been described, both in its purpose and in its consequences, and if it can be stayed only by such costly means, may we not proceed a step farther, and say that it should be prevented, if possible, by the use of every wise precaution, whether immediate or remote? The immediate methods by which disturbances of this kind may be prevented lie with the Government; the more distant or indirect, with the people. The Government can, and therefore should, observe two rules by which its action may be made conducive to the public peace; one rule prompting, the other restraining, action. It should be prepared for an emergency which it may have occasion to anticipate. It should not keep itself in ignorance of the state of the public feeling, studiously avoiding or discrediting information which would place it in acquaintance with the phases of opinion or the modes of influence which prevail among the people; and, when in possession of the knowledge which may forewarn it of danger, it should be ready to meet the first appearance of such danger. The duty of prevention may be divided between the general and the local authorities: they should concur and co-operate. No jealousy should hinder their common effort to avert disaster from the interests which they are alike bound to sustain. If there may be a foolish distrust of the good sense and right purpose by which the people are usually inspired, there may also be a blind confidence equally mischievous. There always exists a dangerous class in the community; and men may always be found, ready to use this class for the promotion of their own

nefarious designs. The public sentiment may be, on the whole, sound and loyal, yet be subject to spasms of revolt against lawful authority under a misapprehension which artful and wicked men foster. In view of this liability to contagious excitement, while the Government should be ready to protect its own authority against surprise, it should, by holding its action under restraint, abstain from needless provocation of the public sensibility. Measures which it deems essential to the general welfare should be adopted and prosecuted, however unpopular; for the prejudice or caprice of the multitude is the most unsafe guidance which they to whom the public interests are intrusted can consult. But a wise administration of public affairs will never be disjoined from an endeavor to avoid collision with popular sentiment; and therefore it will adjust its measures, as far as is consistent with order and security, to the state of the public mind. A firm and cautious policy — firm because it is cautious, and cautious that it may be firm — will distinguish its history.

The more remote means of prevention are in the hands of the people; and these are of two kinds. In the first place, the people should protect themselves against the plots of selfish men by refusing to follow such leaders. Demagogues are the curse of a free country, not because there are more unprincipled men in a republic than under a monarchy, but because they have a larger opportunity of influence. Such men should always be held under suspicion and rebuke. The greater their talent, the more should they be distrusted; the louder their professions of attachment to the people or to the institutions of the land, — no matter which side they take on any political question, — the less should their counsel be heeded. Ambitious, greedy, false-hearted, cunning, they instigate others to crimes which they dare not themselves commit, and betray the multitude to a worse fate than any which the folly of the Government could bring on them. An incompetent or bad administration of public affairs may produce much suffering; but the promoters

of faction and disorder poison the fountains of social life. In every political party unworthy men seek distinction, as every religious sect includes hypocrites who disgrace religion. The more wakeful should all parties be against the seductions, and the more resolute in protecting themselves against the influence, of men of this class.

The chief security, however, against a recurrence of such scenes as have recently cast a gloom over every honest face, is the education of the people, — education which shall at once instruct their minds and regulate their passions. In other countries, the education of the whole people is either impossible, from a want of proper provision; or compulsory, being made a part of the machinery of government. Here it is at the same time universal and free. The people, under arrangements which they have themselves authorized, and of which they voluntarily bear the expense, both furnish and receive the instruction needful to make them intelligent and faithful in the discharge of their political duties. This instruction is not addressed to the understanding alone: it informs the conscience, enriches the heart, and prepares the will for its decisions in active life. To say that a well-taught people could never be led into excesses which they might afterwards regret, would impute to them a progress in mental and moral culture which they cannot be justly expected to reach in the present state of society; and would also require the school to exert an influence over the religious sentiments, with which, in the variety of religious persuasions that exist among us, it cannot be intrusted. In the large sense in which we may use the term education, as the training of all the faculties and elements which combine for the production of character, a thoroughly educated people may be pronounced safe against the arts of corrupt politicians or the mutiny of their own passions. Such training commits the people to a promise which the Government may in anticipation exact from them, that its measures shall be fairly judged and its will observed. Public education, like domestic, begins

with childhood; but it does not end even with youth. The Library, from which every citizen may supply himself with instructive reading, is designed for the education of the people, and is instrumental to that end, as truly as the schoolroom. A community furnished with the means of universal education, in its schoolhouses, its libraries, and its churches, with their special arrangements for the young, is as effectually guarded against popular commotion as is possible under the conditions of earthly existence. The first duty of a free people is to see that these advantages are brought within the reach of every one, especially of those who stand lowest on the social scale; and then to see that they are used. A community has a right to require of its members that they do not grow up in ignorance. The coercion which makes children intelligent and good is not tyranny, but beneficence. In the riots of the last week, alike in New York and in this city, we are told that a large part of the mob consisted of boys and girls under sixteen years of age. Those boys and girls, we may say with the utmost confidence, had not been regular attendants at schools of any kind, private or public, secular or religious. Their home was the street, their companionship was with the indolent and the vile, their training had been amidst domestic disorder and social misery. In those same mobs were seen infuriate women, whose ignorance was the sad excuse for their shameless conduct. The material of which mobs are composed is not taken from our High, our Grammar, or our Primary schools; and, just as soon as these institutions shall gather within their walls all the children of the city whose age qualifies them to enter, the next generation will enjoy undisturbed social order. The material of which mobs are composed is not drawn from happy and pure homes; and just so soon as good morals shall become the ornament of life in every dwelling, will the public peace be rescued from the danger of violation. Which is the better, which the cheaper, treatment of social evils, suppression or prevention?

The exposition of duty which I have given is impartial in its bearings. It holds both the Government and the people to a discharge of their proper functions. The function of the Government is the protection of the public order. This is its special duty. All other offices which it undertakes are subsidiary or incidental. Government is not organized to secure the public prosperity: an intelligent people will see to that themselves. Nor to build up national greatness: nations do not exist for the sake of the power they may wield. Nor to make itself independent of the popular will: that is an abuse of its opportunity. Government exists for the sake of that social order, without which there can be neither prosperity nor strength. When true to its end, it acts in the interest of the people: for it has no interest of its own distinct from theirs; it controls their action only for their good. The more generally diffused education becomes, the people, learning self-control, need the less to be governed by external authority. The function of the people is self-government. They must watch over their own interests; and the first of these interests, as we have seen, is the maintenance of the social order. No member of the community has a right to be negligent in this matter. He may not leave the whole work to the Government. By sound speech at the proper time, and by good example always, he must help the Government to justify its existence. No faithful citizen will embarrass the public authorities by wilful misrepresentation, captious remark, or disloyal silence. The Government should hold itself amenable to fair criticism, whether from the press or the platform; but from false statement, artful insinuation, and ungenerous treatment of every kind, it should be protected by the sanctity of the place which it fills, if not by its own majesty. Under popular forms of Government, the administration of public affairs will be a prize towards which different parties will direct their efforts, and for which they may strive in earnest and honorable competition; but dishonorable attempts to promote the ends of a party, whether in the

possession or in the pursuit of power, are a scandal and a sin. Government is a Divine institution, and should not be seized nor be directed by unholy hands.

Let Government be held to a strict performance of its legitimate service. "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil." The Government must coerce the destroyers of its own authority. Within the limits of the freedom consistent with its own preservation, it may waive a demand for obedience; but it cannot permit active or passive resistance to proceed beyond those limits. The only security for the present, the only hope for the future, the only recognition and discharge of duty by the men whom we have elevated to public places, the only loyal conduct or sagacious regard to their own interests among the people, are found in the care which all shall take of those barriers against social disorder which are the pillars of freedom and the safeguards of progress.

My friends, I make no apology, which the Christian preacher should never put himself in a position to proffer, nor do I ask indulgence, which it would be impertinent to crave, for the remarks which have now invited your attention. I could not speak on any other topic: I could not refrain from speaking on this. We thought we had fallen on evil times when the sound of martial music announced the passage of troops to distant fields of strife, and the swift-winged messenger brought us intelligence of friends or neighbors fallen in battle; but darker is the day in which our streets are filled with an angry populace bent on wild mischief, and only the cannon and the sword can rescue our dwellings from the burglar's entrance or the incendiary's torch. As I pass along our chief thoroughfare, and, while congratulating myself that in this city the spirit of destruction had but a brief season in which to scatter alarm or perpetrate crime, see on the board to which all eyes are turned for the latest news, "Reign of Terror in New York!" I ask, Where am I? Is this revolutionary France to which we have been

carried back? Have history, civilization, and religion receded more than half a century? Is this our dear country, the land of free institutions, of abundant privileges, of equal rights, of unexampled prosperity, of unparalleled hospitality to the necessitous from foreign shores, the land in which the people rule through the constitutional agencies which they have themselves chosen,—is this dear land of ours stained by the blood of men whose aim it is to destroy the fabric of social order, and plunge us into ruin; or, worse still, of men who have sacrificed their lives in a vain defence of lawful authority against popular violence? Forbid it, God of our fathers, God of righteousness and peace, on whose own strong yet paternal arm of government the universe rests in safety! No: the efforts of the wicked or the foolish shall not be successful. I am told that occasion for anxiety has not wholly ceased. Armed men are, on this sacred day, stationed in the Hall which cradled our national independence, to prevent the subversion of that independence by the red hand of license. Be it so, then. Better security at the point of the bayonet, than desolation under the tyranny of a mob; but better yet, when the elements of that mob shall have been scattered beyond the contagion of numbers or the exasperation of sympathy, and when calmer thought shall have led a misguided populace to see their conduct in its true light, and to repent of their fearful mistake.

We need not be alarmed in regard to the issue of this struggle between authority and passion. It may cost yet more of life. I trust not; but here and in every city of New England and in New York, with all the wretched material which unprincipled men and uninstructed children supply to endanger the public welfare, the disturbers of the peace will be overpowered. The immediate ground of apprehension will cease; but the lesson which this one week has taught us, let it never be forgotten. It is addressed to every one's consciousness of duty, to every one's sense of personal interest. Let none of us be careless or indifferent

about the public order. Let no political prejudices or partialities blind us to the paramount importance of sustaining the Government in the exercise of its legitimate functions. Out of this great misfortune, as out of all the experience of the time, we may extract profitable counsel. We shall not have suffered in vain, if we learn to conduct ourselves in all the relations of life as good citizens and good men; mindful of the dependence of the public welfare on private character, and faithful to the principle which underlies national prosperity as well as personal success, that, while "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," it is righteousness alone that exalteth a people. May the good providence of our God grant, as most surely it will, if we be steadfast in our loyalty to truth and right, that our fears, once allayed, never be revived; and that our country, rescued from the schemes of rebellion and the violence of passion, be filled with a united, tranquil, and happy people! Then shall the voice of our thanksgiving go up in louder strains than ever before, and the future history of our land be but the more glorious for the calamities that have darkened the period through which we are passing.

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